Learn How to Eat Slower Step by Step to Lose Weight

The last lesson discussed the importance of regular mealtimes for losing weight. Another mealtime technique to help you eat less while enjoying your food more is to eat slower. Reducing the pace can be difficult until you form new habits. This lesson has steps you can take to become a more leisurely diner.

Steps to Change Your Thinking

1. **Find ways to relax.** Wolfing down your food may be just one symptom of a hectic lifestyle. Set aside time to unwind. Exercise regularly. Practice meditation or get a massage.

2. **Learn to recognize true hunger. One of the major advantages of eating slower is that you give your body a chance to signal you when it's full.** The process takes about 20 minutes.

3. **Engage all your senses.** Get absorbed in your soup. Notice all the scents, colors, tastes, and textures.

4. **Plan ahead.** Having everything on hand for a stir fry beats ransacking the kitchen after a long day at work to locate anything edible. **You'll feel more at ease with meal preparation when you start out with everything you need.** When you're more relaxed in preparing the meal, you're also less stressed when eating it.

Steps to Change Your Eating

1. **Put your fork down. Place your fork or spoon back down on the table in between each bite.** All those additional seconds to retrieve your utensils add up.

2. **Chew slowly. Chewing thoroughly is good for your digestion and waistline.** You may want to count or just wait until each mouthful is easy to swallow.

3. **Serve small portions.** Dish out one small serving at a time and keep the rest of the food off the table. If you want to have seconds, you'll have to get up and go

get them.

4. **Drink more water.** Fill a large water glass before each meal. Keep a pitcher on the table. Sip between bites and between courses.

5. **Snack between meals.** It's easier to dawdle over your plate when you already feel full. Try eating something small every few hours.

6. **Limit your menu.** Buffets and tapas-style restaurants are popular because they tend to make you eat more. While you're learning to slow down, you may want to restrict the number of different foods you eat at one time.

7. **Pick foods that demand effort.** Some foods require so much work that you'll probably fall asleep before you can overeat. Snack on whole nuts you have to crack. Pick up some pineapple or shrimp with shells.

8. **Set a timer.** Eventually you'll be able to pace yourself naturally, but a timer can be useful at first. Watching the seconds will teach you how to pause for 30 seconds between bites.

Steps to Change Your Environment

1. **Set a gracious table at home.** Candles, flowers, and cloth napkins will encourage you to sit down and take your time. Turn off the TV and put on classical music or mellow jazz.

2. **Pick restaurants for ambience.** When you go out, look for eateries with an inviting atmosphere. You can find good options even if you're on a budget. Skip the fast food places and try a tea shop. Buy a sandwich at the hotel coffee shop and loll around the lounge area.

3. **Dress up.** Similarly, sprucing yourself up can condition you to eat more slowly. When you feel good about how you look, you're less likely to overindulge.

4. **Focus on conversation. Think of dining as a social experience.** Get together with friends for brunch or throw a cookout in your backyard. Pay attention to offering hospitality to your guests. You'll still enjoy your food, but your company will be the main event.

Eating slowly is free, and it really does help you to lose weight. As you become more mindful of your food, you'll soon find that you love lingering over your meals.

One of the beneficial things about taking longer to eat is that you'll feel satisfied but eat less. In the next lesson, you'll learn some great strategies to help you with portion control, too.

Here's what you need to do today:

See how long you can stretch out tonight's dinner. Remember to put down your fork between each bite. Enjoy socializing with your family. And time how long it takes you to eat the meal. Tomorrow, see if you can stretch out that time even longer.